

Israel stops medical aid for Arabs

CAIRO (R) — Israel has refused to allow Egyptian medical aid worth \$30,000 to reach the Palestinian Red Crescent (PRE) in the occupied Gaza Strip, a Foreign Ministry official said Sunday. Taha Farnawani, director of the Palestine Department in the Foreign Ministry, said Israel did not explain its objections. Mr. Farnawani said he would seek help from the International Red Cross to allow the shipment through. Relations between Israel and Egypt, the only Arab country to sign a peace treaty with the Jewish state, have been strained since the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Israelis have occupied the Gaza Strip since taking it by force in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

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Arar to visit Egypt

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sulaiman Arar is to pay an official visit to Egypt. This was announced after a regular cabinet meeting Sunday presided over by Prime Minister Ahmad Obaidat. The date of Mr. Arar's visit was not disclosed.

Arabs to protest Israeli demonstration

AMMAN (Petra) — Palestinian Arabs in the occupied village of Eksal in the Galilee will stage a demonstration on Tuesday in protest against a decision by Israeli Herut Party led by Yitzhak Shamir to storm the village. Earlier reports quoted Israeli Radio as announcing that Herut Party youths will organise a demonstration which will march through the village to protest hostile Arab attitudes towards the Zionist state.

Afghan rebels get Egyptian missiles

LONDON (AP) — The United States is sending Egyptian-made surface-to-air missiles to Islamic guerrillas in Afghanistan to counter the expanding use of helicopter gunships by Soviet forces there, the Sunday Times reported. The missiles, an Egyptian equivalent of the Soviet Sam-7 shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapon, are part of 235 million pounds (\$280 million) worth of covert aid to the rebels approved by the administration of U.S. President Ronald Reagan last month, the newspaper said. The Sunday Times' defence correspondent, James Adams, said that for the past two months, Afghans have been receiving training in Egypt in the use of the missiles. The first of the weapons will reach the battlefield in the new year, he said. Adams said that in recent months, Soviet forces have been using fleets of helicopter gunships to attack guerrillas from the air.

Poll forecasts Gandhi landslide

NEW DELHI (R) — A major opinion poll forecast Sunday that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party would sweep back to power with a landslide victory in India's Dec. 24 elections. The poll in the India Today news magazine said Congress (I), with 351 seats at present, would win 366 of the 511 seats at stake. It predicted an 11 per cent swing to Congress (I) with the party increasing its share of the overall vote from 42.7 per cent to 54 per cent. The poll, which correctly forecast the result of India's last election in 1980, was based on interviews with 12,000 people selected to represent a cross-section of voters.

Denmark calls off hunt for submarine

COPENHAGEN (R) — A hunt by Danish security forces for a possible submarine in a fjord on the north west coast of Zealand has been called off, the admiral said Sunday. The search began in a fjord on Thursday after an unidentified object was sighted on radar. The admiral told Reuters that nothing had been found in the fjord and security forces would return to routine patrolling of the area.

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King meets Murphy; Masri stresses call for international conference

AMMAN (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein met Sunday with U.S. envoy Richard Murphy, who has been touring the Middle East to discuss efforts to end the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon.

A spokesman at the Royal Palace said the King had a working lunch with Mr. Murphy, who arrived in Jordan earlier in the day from Cairo after earlier stops in Israel, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Lebanon.

Attending the meeting were His Highness Prince Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein, Prime Minister Ahmad Obaidat, Chief of the Royal Court Marwan Al Qasem, Court Minister Adnan Abu Odeh, Commander-in-Chief of the Jordanian Armed Forces Gen. Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker, Jordanian Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and the U.S. ambassador in Amman, Paul Becker.

The Jordanian News Agency, Petra, said the Foreign Minister, Mr. Masri, met with Mr. Murphy prior to the lunch and reconfirmed Jordan's invitation to hold an international peace conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict under United Nations auspices. "This conference is the only acceptable outlet to reach a comprehensive, lasting settlement of the Palestinian conflict which will satisfy all the parties concerned," Mr. Masri said.

Lebanese agree on deployment of army in Kharroub region

BEIRUT (R) — Druze and Lebanese government officials have agreed on a Syrian-backed plan to deploy the army south from Beirut into territory held by warring militias, political sources said Sunday. Objections from the mainly Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) have twice delayed deployment, seen by Lebanese officials as preparing for army control of security throughout South Lebanon after Israel ends its occupation.

Denktash says U.N. draft 'a whole'

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash said Sunday a draft agreement on Cyprus reached in United Nations talks this month cannot be amended.

He told journalists on arrival here from New York: "The draft is a whole. It either will be approved or rejected. Both sides gave up things and received things. There can be no alterations later." Differences have already emerged on the talks, which ended last week with an announcement by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar that Mr. Denktash and Greek-Cypriot leader Spyros Kyprianou, the president of Cyprus, are to meet in January.

Gorbachev, Thatcher meet for space arms talks

LONDON (R) — Soviet politburo member Mikhail Gorbachev met British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher Sunday for talks at which he was expected to urge her to use her influence with the United States to press for a ban on space weapons.

As their discussions got under way at the premier's country residence, Chequers, a senior British government official indicated that London would give Mr. Gorbachev a sympathetic hearing and might go some way to agreeing with Moscow's views.

Mr. Gorbachev, number two in the Soviet hierarchy, was due to discuss a wide range of bilateral and East-West affairs at the meeting but both British and Soviet officials said they expected space arms to be the chief topic.

Moscow has said it regards this issue as the main item on the agenda for next month's U.S.-Soviet arms talks in Geneva and made clear it wants the West European powers to urge President Reagan to abandon his "Star Wars" defence programme.

Mrs. Thatcher is due to meet Mr. Reagan in Washington later this week and British officials said Mr. Gorbachev would regard Sunday's meeting as a crucial opportunity to encourage Britain's misgivings about the president's plans.

In a television interview broadcast as the talks started, Foreign Office Minister of State Malcolm Rifkind made clear that Britain opposed the military use of space and was sympathetic to Moscow's demands for a ban on cosmic weapons tests.

The sources said the multi-tentative army council was expected to meet Monday to set a starting date for the move into the Kharroub region, 25 kilometres south of Beirut at the southern tip of the Druze-held Shouf Mountains. Under the agreement, a 1,300-strong force would set up a limited number of checkpoints on the coastal road between Beirut and Israeli frontlines at Sidon on the Awwali River and move into several villages now held by militia fighters.

Druze fighters have clashed almost every day this month with Christians defending a small enclave in the Kharroub, but the region was reported quiet Sunday.

The agreement, reported by newspapers in outline, prompted the French language daily L'Orient Le Jour to comment: "The return of state authority, though timid and by the back door, is preferable to fighting between communities who know very well they are condemned to live together."

A previous version of the plan was agreed in principle by the Falangist Lebanese Forces and the Shiite militia Amal but was stalled by detailed objections from PSP leader Walid Junblat.

Syria strongly backed the plan, and Mr. Junblat and his senior officials had talks last week in Damascus with President Hafez Al Assad and Vice-President

Abdul Halim Khaddam. The sources said under the new plan troops would stay close to the coast road near Beirut, where PSP fighters in overlooking hills command the terrain, but further south would deploy at several villages, including the inland Druze town of Shiheem.

Observers would supervise the withdrawal of gunmen from flashpoints before troops took up positions, they added.

Syria's government newspaper, Tishrin, said in an article attacking Israeli policy Sunday: "Israel's arguments at the Naqoura talks, concentrating on the disability of the Lebanese army to maintain security in the South, have failed."

Israel is sceptical of the Lebanese army's ability to police territory south of the Awwali River in the event of an Israeli withdrawal and wants major roles for the U.N. and an Israeli-backed militia.

U.N.-hosted talks on ending the occupation resume Monday.

Prime Minister Rashid Karami, speaking on state-run Beirut Radio, said security in the northern part of the occupied zone should be the task of the Lebanese army alone, with possible U.N. support to the South.

"We don't accept UNIFIL (U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon) deployment north of the Litani River since there is no justification for it," he said.

Mr. Masri had warned last week in an interview that it would be a mistake for the United States to concentrate on the Lebanese crisis alone and ignore the overall Arab-Israeli conflict.

Petra quoted Mr. Masri as saying "this conference is the only acceptable outlet to reach a comprehensive, lasting settlement of the Palestinian problem which will satisfy all parties concerned."

Jordan has been campaigning for the convening of an international conference in which all parties would participate "on equal footing."

Following his meeting with Mr. Mubarak in Cairo Saturday, Mr. Murphy told reporters: "we don't think it (such a conference) is a setting that will be useful for advancing constructive changes."

A spokesman for the U.S. embassy in Amman told the Jordan Times that Mr. Murphy would end his visit to Amman Monday morning. Mr. Murphy may fly to Israel for a second visit there within a week, but the spokesman could not confirm this.

Upon arrival here, Mr. Murphy was met at the airport by Mr. Tareq Madi, chief of the protocol at the Jordan Ministry, and the American charge d'affaires in Amman, Mr. Edward Gheim, and other embassy officials.



His Majesty King Hussein receives U.S. envoy Richard Murphy (third from left) at the Royal Court Sunday. Attending the meeting are His Highness Prince Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein, Prime Minister Ahmad Obaidat, Court Minister Adnan Abu Odeh and the U.S. Ambassador in Amman, Paul Becker (Petra photo)

Iraq hits 2 'naval targets' in Gulf

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said its warplanes Sunday hit two "naval targets" in the Gulf, one of them "very large" — the term it often uses to refer to oil tankers.

A military communiqué said the very large target was hit and left in flames south of Iran's big Kharg Island oil terminal at 1230 local time (0930 GMT). "A later communiqué said a second target, described as 'small' was destroyed by Iraqi warplanes at 4.30 p.m. (1330 GMT) it said this target was hit in the Gulf but was not specific.

Iraq never names vessels it claims to have hit. There was no independent confirmation of Sunday's Iraqi assertions. Shipping sources down the Gulf said they had heard no distress calls or other reports of vessels in difficulties Sunday.

Iraq also announced that its warplanes Sunday flew 155 combat missions in the so-called Misan area of the Gulf war front against Iranian troop concentrations "preparing to commit an aggression on our border."

Iraq has warned that Iran is planning an offensive in the area, in the south-central sector of the front, and Iraqi planes and helicopter gunships have attacked Iranian positions over the past 10 days.

Meanwhile salvage crews fighting fire aboard the Greek oil tanker Ninemia, hit in a Gulf war missile attack Saturday, brought the blaze under control and took the vessel in tow Sunday night, Gulf shipping sources said.

The 111,688 ton tanker will be taken south to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates for damage assessment and repairs, they said.

The Ninemia is believed to have been hit by Iraqi warplanes which Saturday reported successful attacks on two large ships.

A Baghdad military spokesman said the pilots saw flames and columns of thick smoke billowing from the "very large naval target" as they headed for base.

There was still doubt Sunday night about casualties on board the Ninemia which was hit in the hull, above the water line. Gulf sources said a ship at the scene reported two crewmen missing, one a Pakistani and the other Greek, but shipping sources in Singapore said only one man had been killed.

The remaining 25 crew were rescued after abandoning ship.

Sudan peace moves underway

LONDON (AP) — Two wealthy businessmen have launched a bid to end the guerrilla war in southern Sudan through negotiations between President Jaafar Numeiri and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). London's Observer newspaper reported Sunday.

Roland "Tiny" Rowland, head of the London-based Lonrho Mining and Publishing Conglomerate, and Adnan Khashoggi, a Saudi Arabian billionaire, have been conducting a form of shuttle diplomacy between Mr. Numeiri and John Garang, the American-educated head of the SPLA, the newspaper said.

Both their private jets were parked at Khartoum Airport last weekend as they met with Mr. Numeiri to discuss the negotiations, the paper said.

"Rowland has personally been handling negotiations with Garang while Khashoggi, acting as a sort of merchant banker for the country, is planning to raise billions of dollars for the Sudan by the forward sale of oil in the ground," it reported.

Israeli ruling coalition heads for major crisis

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's Likud and Labour parties were trying Sunday to prevent a dispute between two small religious factions from developing into a full-scale coalition government crisis, cabinet officials said.

The dispute between the National Religious Party (NRP) and the ultra-orthodox Shas Movement over control of key state religious functions led Sunday to the resignation of Shas leader Yitzhak Peretz as minister without portfolio.

Likud, which considers Shas as one of its main allies in the nine-party coalition, has issued a thinly veiled threat that it would leave the government unless a solution was found in the 48 hours before Mr. Peretz' resignation takes effect.

A senior cabinet official, who belongs to the Labour Party, told reporters Labour and Likud ministers were mediating between Shas and the NRP to avert a crisis.

"We don't believe this dispute could really bring down the government and 48 hours is a long time," he said.

Differences centre on which party should control the Religious Affairs Ministry and which the Interior Ministry. The dispute has been dragging on for months and predates the formation of the government in September.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres has been holding both portfolios temporarily.

Transport Minister Chaim Corfu of Likud told reporters after Sunday's cabinet meeting he did not see a way for Likud to continue in the government if Shas pulled out.

"We hope matters are not allowed to deteriorate to that point," he said.

The Labour official said Shas' defection could destroy the delicate balance between Labour and Likud.

"The whole basis of this government is the strict equality of forces in the cabinet between Labour and its allies on the one hand and Likud and its satellites on the other," he said.

"If Shas goes, Labour will have a majority and Likud will have a problem," he added.

U.S. official optimistic about Geneva talks

BONN (R) — Veteran U.S. nuclear arms control negotiator Gen. Edward Rowny was quoted Sunday as saying talks with Moscow on strategic weapons could resume at 48-hours notice, independently of talks on space or medium-range weapons.

In an interview with the magazine Der Spiegel released here ahead of publication, Gen. Rowny said he was "not aware that any one else has been entrusted with leading the START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) as special adviser on arms control for the U.S. side until a year ago."

Gen. Rowny, regarded as a hardliner on arms control issues, was responding to a question about President Reagan's appointment of Ambassador Paul Nitze as special adviser on arms control for the talks between Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in Geneva on Jan. 7 and 8.

He stressed that arms control negotiations between the superpowers ended a year ago when Moscow walked out of the talks on medium-range weapons and then declined to set a fresh date for the

next round of START. "Consider please that the Soviets did not quit the START talks. Our START team is still together. We meet twice a week... we are ready at any time to resume the (Geneva) talks within 48 hours," he was quoted as saying.

Gen. Rowny said "very good progress" had been made in the START talks until their suspension at the end of last year.

He added: "We progressed about twice as fast as in SALT-2." These were the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty Talks Gen. Rowny quit in 1979 in protest against what he regarded as the soft position of then President Jimmy Carter.

Spiegel said Gen. Rowny would go to Geneva next month with Mr. Shultz and Mr. Nitze.

Stressing that advancing arms technology would make verification one of the biggest problems in any new arms pact, Gen. Rowny said: "In START, there were indications in 1983 that the Soviets understood the problem and they took a few cautious steps in this direction."

Trade Unions to resume ties with Egyptian federation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Labour Unions Federation (JLUF) Sunday announced it is resuming its relations with the Egyptian Unions Federation.

The announcement was made by JLUF's Central Council Chairman Abdul Halim Khaddam in a cable he sent to the president of the Egyptian federation.

In his cable, Mr. Khaddam said that Jordan's labour unions have deep faith in, and extend support for, the struggle of the Egyptian labour movement and appreciate its leading national role to improve the condition of Arab labourers.

He said in view of this stand, JLUF has decided to restore relations with the Egyptian Labour Union Federation.

Mr. Khaddam said that the absence of the Egyptian Labour Federation from the Arab scene "has caused a deep rift in the Arab labour movement and therefore, the return of this federation to pan-Arab activities is bound to strengthen the Arab labour movement."

He also announced that he accepted an invitation extended to him by the Egyptian federation to visit Egypt and discuss issues of common concern.

Arafat briefs Saleh on PNC

SANAA (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat Sunday briefed North Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the outcome of last month's controversial session of the Palestine National Council (PNC), the Palestinian parliament, officials said.

Mr. Arafat has been touring several Arab capitals to explain Palestinian strategy following the PNC meeting in Amman, boycotted by five Syrian-backed Palestinian factions.

The officials said Mr. Arafat, who arrived earlier Sunday, was expected to stay in Sanaa several days.

Earlier Farouk Kaddoumi was confirmed as head of the Political Department of the PLO in the new Executive Committee elected in Amman last month, the Palestinian News Agency Wafa said Saturday.

The Executive Committee, the PLO "cabinet", met in Tunis on Thursday and Friday under the chairmanship of Mr. Arafat to distribute portfolios within the 14-member body.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Abdul Hamid Saeh, speaker of the PNC, Palestinian sources said.

Wafa said there was no change at the head of the political (foreign affairs), military, mass organisation and social affairs departments.

U.S. to deploy Pershings in Pakistan, report says

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet army newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) said Sunday that the United States planned to deploy Pershing missiles in Pakistan, close to the southern border of the Soviet Union.

The newspaper said that a recent visit to Islamabad by head of the U.S. joint chiefs of staff John Vessey was aimed at expanding military co-operation between Pakistan and the United States.

"Thus one of Washington's most ominous plans is obvious — to deploy its Pershings close to the Southern borders of the USSR as well," it said.

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Manama celebrates 13 years of independence

Bahraini leader calls for Arab unity, reawakening

BAHRAIN (AP) — The emir of Bahrain on Sunday deplored conditions of Arab disunity, urging all Arab leaders to transcend their bickering and stand together against common challenges.

In a speech marking the 13th anniversary of independence, Sheikh Issa bin Salman Al Khalifa said he was "confident that an Arab reawakening was at hand, to revive solidarity and rejuvenate itself."

He said that the 50-month-old Iran-Iraq war has impelled the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to seek means of ending the "bitter struggle and keep the region away from the pitfalls of super-power conflicts."

The GCC groups Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman in a regional economic integration and collective defence pact.

Sheikh Issa called on Iran and Iraq to resort to "logic and wisdom and make the Gulf region secure by cultivating Iraq's peace overtures."

Iraq has offered to negotiate with its war foe, but Iran has rejected this.

The Bahraini leader asked both warring sides to heed mediation bids by Islamic and non-aligned nations groups.

Bahrain was meanwhile *en fete*, with government buildings decorated and state-run radio and television stations playing patriotic songs and national music.

The emir marked the occasion with an order to release an un-

specified number of prisoners, the Gulf News Agency reported.

Theatrical troupes were to stage special performances, while police bands were playing in public parks. Fireworks were to enliven the sky at night, while officials and visitors from neighbouring Gulf countries were pouring into Bahrain in large numbers to take part in the celebrations.

Newspapers splashed photos and reports about Sheikh Issa's efforts during the past decade to modernise this island state.

They said that despite near depletion of crude oil resources, Sheikh Issa has successfully maintained for his people a comparatively high standard of living based mainly on a free-wheeling economy, offshore banking and tourism.

Bahrain was the first Arab country to enjoy the blessing of oil wealth, and the first to experience the bitter taste of oil depletion.

Financial achievements

Bracing for the post-oil era, Sheikh Issa nine years ago issued a series of decrees that paved the road for private sector investments and state capitalist enterprises.

He also sought to foster age-old ties with neighbouring Saudi Ara-

bia, the Middle East oil giant, and the rest of the Gulf states.

His main accomplishments included: a free banking zone — complete with 76 Off Shore banking units with assets totalling more than \$60 billion — 18 commercial banks, 58 bank representative offices, 13 investment banks, 119 exempt companies and scores of brokers and money changers.

Exempt companies are regional concerns excluded from the law that imposes majority ownership by Bahraini nationals.

The transformation is evident in Manama, Bahrain's capital city, where the skyline is dotted with marble towers and tinted glass office structures that make up what bankers here call the "Wall Street of the Gulf."

Sheikh Issa also is credited for initiating the aluminium smelter, the Arabian ship repair yard, and the Gulf Air Company.

He has underlined the importance of the Saudi link. His latest action in that direction was to get the 25-kilometre, \$564-million Saudi-Bahrain causeway project underway.

The bridge has been taking shape and is due to be completed in early 1986.

Information Minister Tariq Al Moayed said that, when the causeway is completed, Bahrain will "no longer be an island. People will be able to go to work in (eastern) Saudi Arabia in the morning and return to Bahrain at night."



MASRI MEETS MURPHY — Foreign Minister Masri holds talks with U.S. envoy Richard Murphy during Mr. Murphy's short visit to Jordan (Petra photo)

Maltese president begins Soviet visit today

VALETTA (R) — Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff leaves for Moscow Monday to set the seal on a new-found friendship between the tiny Mediterranean island and the Communist giant.

Visiting the Soviet Union for the first time in his 13 years as prime minister, he is assured of red carpet treatment.

According to the scant information released so far, he will meet President Konstantin Chernenko and is thought likely to return with a friendship and cooperation treaty, shipbuilding orders for Malta's ailing dockyard and other orders for Maltese industries which the government says are still suffering from the effects of the world recession.

In 1981, Malta and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on the neutrality of the island. Attached to the accord was a five-year trade agreement in which the two countries pledged to give each other most-favoured nation treatment.

It was the trade agreement which gave impetus to wider Maltese-Soviet contacts. Malta had always insisted there should be trade with the Soviet Union before Moscow could open a full embassy on the island.

This became possible in October 1981, 14 years after diplomatic relations had been established.

Malta surprised the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in January 1981 when it granted the Soviet Union facilities to store up to 200,000 tonnes of bunker fuel in tanks hewn out of the rock by NATO in the 1950s when the island was still a British fortress and NATO had a regional headquarters there.

Soviet merchant ships are able to make use of the facility, although warships are barred from entering Malta in accordance with the island's declaration of neutrality and non-alignment.

Klibi's Arab tour aims at paving way for summit

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Arab League Secretary-General Chadli Klibi arrived in Algiers Saturday night for talks with Algerian leaders, the Algerian news agency APS said Sunday.

In an arrival statement he said he would discuss North African and Middle East issues.

Mr. Klibi visited Morocco last week and conferred with King Hassan. He arrived in Algiers from Tunis.

Mr. Klibi's tour of Arab countries is designed to pave the way for convening an Arab summit meeting, according to an Arab League spokesman in Tunis quoted by the Jordanian News Agency Petra.

Petra quoted the spokesman as saying that Saudi Arabia is the most eligible country to host the summit and is currently holding intensive contacts with Arab states to prepare a suitable climate for the summit and ground to ensure its success.

Mr. Klibi will hold consultations with Saudi Arabia and other Arab League members before announcing a final decision in the light of his efforts, the spokesman added.

The Kuwaiti News Agency has reported that Arab diplomatic efforts are being exerted for holding the Arab summit to discuss issues on the Arab and international scenes.

The agency, quoting informed sources in Tunis said that Algeria and Saudi Arabia as well as the Arab League will be involved in paving the way for the summit in Riyadh.

Egypt, U.S. sign \$225m aid agreement

CAIRO (R) — Egypt and the United States Sunday signed an agreement for \$225 million in U.S. economic aid to finance the purchase of wheat and wheat flour, a U.S. embassy spokesman said.

The agreement represents a quarter of economic aid Egypt will receive from the United States next year in the form of long-term soft loans, he said. The agreement would permit Egypt to purchase about one million metric tonnes of wheat and about 400,000 metric tonnes of wheat flour under the U.S. "food for peace" programme, the spokesman added.

The loan will be repaid over 40 years at two to three per cent interest with a 10-year grace period, he said.

Syria, Iran object to Egypt's presence at OIC talks

SANA'A (R) — Arab hardliner Syria and its ally Iran Sunday spearheaded a move protesting the presence of an Egyptian delegation at a ministerial meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), opening here on Tuesday.

Conference sources said the move, which apparently also won the support of Libya and South Yemen, was made at a preliminary meeting of representatives of member states to the OIC foreign ministers' meeting.

The ministerial session will be the first attended by Egypt since its readmission to the Islamic movement last year. Egypt's membership was suspended after it signed a separate peace treaty with Israel in 1979.

The sources quoted the Syrian delegate as telling the closed-door session Sunday: "We have an Israeli delegation among us," a clear reference to Egypt, the only Arab country to have relations with Israel.

Supporting the Syrian contention, the Iranian delegate accused Cairo of violating OIC principles and demanded the expulsion from the 45-member organisation of any country which has ties with Israel.

The Syrian-Iranian motion was bitterly criticised by Sudan. Egypt's long-standing ally, which described it as a manoeuvre, the sources said.

They quoted the Sudanese delegate as saying Egypt's readmission to the organisation was the result of a resolution taken at a summit conference and "therefore neither this meeting nor the ministerial gathering could rescind it."

The Sudanese delegate added that Egypt had already functioned within the OIC by attending several meetings, to which neither Syria, Iran nor others objected.

Iraq, Senegal, Guinea and Pakistan backed Sudan, the sources said, while Egypt's delegate, Omran Shafie, reiterated the Sudanese view.

During the heated debate, the Libyan and South Yemeni delegates remained silent, but later met the Iranian and Syrian envoys separately to coordinate their attitudes, the sources said. They said this was a clear indication of their support.

Conference officials said the Middle East, particularly the Palestine issue, the Lebanon crisis and the Gulf war, would figure high on the 90-item agenda of the ministerial meeting, which also includes economic and cultural issues.

The ministers are also expected to try to heal the rift between Syria and Libya on the one hand and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on the other.

Assistance to millions of drought-stricken people in Africa will be another worry of the conference.

Pakistan detains 10

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Ten people have been arrested on charges of anti-government activities, an official spokesman said Sunday. Five people have been arrested in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, 1,504 kilometres south of Islamabad, and five at Thatta, in southern Sindh province, in the last two days.

Israeli-backed militiaman shot dead in S. Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — An Israeli-backed "home guard" militiaman was shot dead Sunday in the village of Jouaya in Israeli-occupied South Lebanon, reporters in the area said.

The reporters said Haidar Dayekh was shot and killed by an unidentified man in the village shortly before midday Sunday. Jouaya is 70 kilometres southeast of Beirut and 15 kilometres east of the port city of Tyre.

They said the body of Dayekh, who was in his early 40s, was taken to the Jabal Amel hospital in Tyre.

Dayekh's death was at least the ninth in recent weeks of an Israeli-backed "home guard" militiaman or a civilian identified as a collaborator, with the Israeli occupation force.

Dayekh, who ran the gasoline station in Jouaya, used the code name Abu Hassan and was a Shi'ite Muslim. He told the Associated Press in an interview last year that he had accepted the home guard leadership to protect the villagers. He said he earlier had worked with Palestinian commandos in the area and with Amal, the dominant Shi'ite militia in Lebanon.

In the village of Jibchit about 15 kilometres northeast of Jouaya, a rocket-propelled grenade was fired at the residence of Fuad Fahs, a "home guard" militiaman in the village, the reporters said. There were no injuries, they added. There have been several attempts on Fahs' life in the past six weeks.

Israeli warplanes roared in low reconnaissance flights over the south Sunday, the reporters added.

Peace moves reportedly under way in south Sudan

LONDON (R) — Two international businessmen are conducting peace talks to try to end the guerrilla war in southern Sudan, the Observer newspaper reported Sunday.

It said Roland "Tiny" Rowland, British head of the Lornho conglomerate, and Saudi Arabian billionaire Adnan Khashoggi, put a rescue plan to Sudanese President Jaafar Numeiri in Khartoum last weekend.

Mr. Rowland, whose company owns the Observer, refused to comment, the paper said.

It quoted reliable Sudanese sources as saying that he met rebel leader John Garang, head of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in the past 10 days.

Mr. Garang's guerrillas have halted work on Sudan's oilfields, which are all in the south, and the newspaper said "it is now understood" that Mr. Numeiri was prepared to make Mr. Garang "economic tsar of the south" to oversee the region's development.

The paper said Mr. Khashoggi acted as a sort of merchant banker for Sudan, trying to raise billions of dollars by selling oil still in the ground.

Israel attacks U.N. resolutions

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's Foreign Ministry said Sunday the resolutions criticising Israel passed at the United Nations General Assembly proved that the assembly cannot serve as a peacemaker in the Middle East conflict.

A statement issued by the ministry's press department charged that the "automatic majority" against Israel ruled out the idea of an international peace conference as proposed by the General Assembly on Friday.

Any such conference would be "doomed to fail" by the assembly's bloc voting, said the Israeli statement.

The statement said the assembly debate proved "that a constructive step toward a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is not to be expected from this organ."

The assembly passed three resolutions, summing up its annual debate on the Middle East. They demanded that Israel evacuate occupied Arab territories, condemn Israel for imposing its jurisdiction over Jerusalem and called for an international conference.

Syria, Iran object to Egypt's presence at OIC talks

SANA'A (R) — Arab hardliner Syria and its ally Iran Sunday spearheaded a move protesting the presence of an Egyptian delegation at a ministerial meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), opening here on Tuesday.

Conference sources said the move, which apparently also won the support of Libya and South Yemen, was made at a preliminary meeting of representatives of member states to the OIC foreign ministers' meeting.

The ministerial session will be the first attended by Egypt since its readmission to the Islamic movement last year. Egypt's membership was suspended after it signed a separate peace treaty with Israel in 1979.

The sources quoted the Syrian delegate as telling the closed-door session Sunday: "We have an Israeli delegation among us," a clear reference to Egypt, the only Arab country to have relations with Israel.

Supporting the Syrian contention, the Iranian delegate accused Cairo of violating OIC principles and demanded the expulsion from the 45-member organisation of any country which has ties with Israel.

The Syrian-Iranian motion was bitterly criticised by Sudan. Egypt's long-standing ally, which described it as a manoeuvre, the sources said.

They quoted the Sudanese delegate as saying Egypt's readmission to the organisation was the result of a resolution taken at a summit conference and "therefore neither this meeting nor the ministerial gathering could rescind it."

The Sudanese delegate added that Egypt had already functioned within the OIC by attending several meetings, to which neither Syria, Iran nor others objected.

Iraq, Senegal, Guinea and Pakistan backed Sudan, the sources said, while Egypt's delegate, Omran Shafie, reiterated the Sudanese view.

During the heated debate, the Libyan and South Yemeni delegates remained silent, but later met the Iranian and Syrian envoys separately to coordinate their attitudes, the sources said. They said this was a clear indication of their support.

Conference officials said the Middle East, particularly the Palestine issue, the Lebanon crisis and the Gulf war, would figure high on the 90-item agenda of the ministerial meeting, which also includes economic and cultural issues.

The ministers are also expected to try to heal the rift between Syria and Libya on the one hand and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on the other.

Assistance to millions of drought-stricken people in Africa will be another worry of the conference.

Pakistan detains 10

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Ten people have been arrested on charges of anti-government activities, an official spokesman said Sunday. Five people have been arrested in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, 1,504 kilometres south of Islamabad, and five at Thatta, in southern Sindh province, in the last two days.

AUB issues new appeal for missing librarian

BEIRUT (AP) — The American University of Beirut (AUB) on Sunday issued another appeal for any information on an American librarian who had been missing for 12 days and may have been kidnapped.

A statement issued by AUB and accompanied with a photo of the missing man, Peter Kilburn, was published in Beirut's leading newspapers Sunday.

Mr. Kilburn, 60, was reported missing on Dec. 4 when he failed to show up for work at the AUB's Jafet Library on the campus in west Beirut.

The statement said contacts with various militia and government officials to find Mr. Kilburn were unsuccessful and that his "location remained unknown."

"The American University of Beirut appeals to whoever knows anything about him to take into consideration his deteriorating health," the statement said.

Two other statements issued earlier said Mr. Kilburn's physician was worried about the missing man's health and said he needed "urgent medication."

Three other Americans believed kidnapped in west Beirut also remain missing.

Passenger says Iranians, hijackers were in collusion

KUWAIT (AP) — A Kuwaiti university professor on Sunday reiterated allegations that Iranian authorities were involved in the recent jetliner hijack in which two Americans lost their lives.

Professor Ahmad Al Sharhan told reporters and Kuwait University students that one of the four hijackers had disembarked at Mehrabad Airport, in Tehran, and "spent about 30 minutes talking with Iranian officials."

"Most passengers, including me, aboard the plane felt that the Iranians were in collusion with the hijackers," said Prof. Sharhan, who was among the first group of passengers released by the hijackers.

The six-day hijack drama ended last Sunday, when Tehran said Iranian securitymen stormed the Kuwait Airways Airbus airliner.

Prof. Sharhan said the Iranians were "perfectly relaxed" in dealing with the hijackers.

"The hijack started with a small gun and, suddenly, we saw many more guns, explosives and nylon ropes," he said. "Just how were they (hijackers) able to obtain these things?"

He said that the American William Stanford was seated at his side, when the hijackers said they would not hurt any of the Muslim passengers "except the Kuwaitis."

"The hijackers said they would hurt only the Americans and Kuwaitis," he said. "Stanford at that point told me he wished he were Muslim. He was fidgety. One of the hijackers stuck his gun several times to Stanford's head."

The hijackers, he said, forced Mr. Stanford to stand in the middle of the aircraft's open door and shout "I belong to the White House... please save me."

"Stanford felt he was about to die, and he tried to escape by jumping down from the plane," said Prof. Sharhan. "But one of the hijackers quickly hit him with the butt of his gun. Then the hijacker, Abu Hussein, pulled the trigger twice and killed Stanford."

Prof. Sharhan added that all Pakistani passengers who were aboard the jetliner "also were convinced that the Iranians were actively involved" in the hijack.

France's ex-premier ends Israel visit

TEL AVIV (R) — Former French Prime Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas ended a four-day visit to Israel Sunday and said he was pleased to see Franco-Israeli relations improving. Mr. Delmas met Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and other Israeli leaders during his stay, which was at the invitation of the Foreign Ministry.

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TV & RADIO

JORDAN TELEVISION	BBC WORLD SERVICE
MAIN CHANNEL	639, 720, 1413 KHz
17:00 News	06:00 News
17:10 Cartoons	06:30 News
17:20 Balcans	06:45 Letter from London
17:30 Children's Programme	06:50 World News
17:40 Folklore Programme	07:00 World News
17:50 Armed Forces Programme	07:10 World News
18:00 Programme Review	07:20 World News
18:10 Tomorrow's Programme	07:30 World News
18:20 News in Arabic	07:40 World News
18:30 Local Comedy	07:50 World News
18:40 Sports Magazine (French)	08:00 World News
18:50 News in Hebrew	08:10 World News
19:00 Cowboys	08:20 World News
19:10 Documentary: Heart of the Dragon	08:30 World News
19:20 News in English	08:40 World News
19:30 News in Arabic	08:50 World News
19:40 News in French	09:00 World News
19:50 Sport Magazine (French)	09:10 World News
20:00 News in Hebrew	09:20 World News
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20:50 News in French	10:10 World News
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21:20 Cowboys	10:40 World News
21:30 Documentary: Heart of the Dragon	10:50 World News
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22:00 News in French	11:20 World News
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Phosphate workers demand more pay, better conditions

AOAD asks Jordan to study olive tree protection methods

Architects excel in Al Albait Foundation designs

Secondary exam will be fair for all students, Saket says

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Dubbing it 'the last chance'

THE United Nations General Assembly last week passed a resolution calling on all members to stop their dealings with Israel in order to "isolate it in all fields." Furthermore, the assembly reiterated, what we Arabs always knew and said on every occasion, that Israel is not a peace-loving nation. The reason will be quite obvious to any honest leadership in the world if only it throws a glance at the Israeli expansionist policies and barbaric actions in the occupied Arab territories.

With this resolution the General Assembly wound up its annual debate on the Middle East until next year when it will hold another debate and issue another resolution condemning Israel for the same policies and actions. And this vicious circle will continue year after year the way it has been going on for so many years now. Let us ask ourselves just for a moment, what good has these resolutions done to the Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories? Did the Israelis change their policies towards their Arab neighbours? Definitely not. On the contrary, the Israelis have added new Arab lands to those already under their domination at the expense of Lebanon. They are now pursuing their notorious policies not only on the Palestinians but on the South Lebanese as well while the U.N. passes resolution after resolution condemning these acts.

Although we do appreciate the support of the General Assembly, we have to note that not much good has come out of its resolutions as far as action is concerned. Israel is getting away with all its devious and aggressive acts mainly because there is the Big Daddy, the United States, with all its military and economic resources, always ready to bail its protégé out without giving the slightest consideration to any of the U.N. resolutions.

As long as the U.N. resolutions do not fall in line of fire of U.S. interests in the Middle East, Israel and its policies will flourish in the area. And there is nothing any nation or world body can do about it.

Therefore we Arabs, while following up their activities at the U.N. and other world bodies, must find a way to persuade Washington to adopt a more even-handed approach in its foreign policy. The Arabs must learn to speak the political language that the Americans understand. Jordan and the PLO are about to embark on some very serious steps to neutralise the total American bias towards Israel. Egypt, and probably Iraq and other Arab states as well, are ready to help and support us in this endeavour. Let us see this time whether the U.S. will be ready to understand our position and the extent to which our people are going for peace. If not, at least we will know that we have tried our best, but the other side chose to ignore all sensible options.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Arab responsibility

THE U.N. General Assembly Friday dealt a heavy blow to Zionism and to Israel's occupation of Arab territories. Resolutions passed by the assembly called for isolating Israel, condemning its racial discrimination policies and deploring a decision by a number of countries to move their embassies to Jerusalem, which is an occupied land.

These resolutions embody a defeat for U.S.-Israeli attempts to improve Israel's image which is marked by evil and aggression, and these resolutions reflect the international community's conviction that Israel is a source of all evil and trouble. But for these resolutions to be meaningful, the Arabs have to take a positive and constructive action, and they should exert efforts towards having them put into practice. What is required now is, as King Hussein said, a joint Arab effort and a mobilisation of Arab resources and strength to be translated into practice.

The Arabs have discovered for themselves that the United States has no credibility any longer and that the Europeans are no more reliable, either and they are left with one option: to rely on themselves. They should realise that time awaits no one and so they must act now as the international climate is quite convenient, and in their own favour.

Al Dustour: Persistent U.S. negativism

THOUGH HIS main reason for Richard Murphy's visit to the Middle East is to try to break the deadlock in the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations for an Israeli pullout from Lebanon, the U.S. assistant secretary of state opted for underlining Washington's rejection of the idea of an international conference.

Murphy, who is on record as saying that the U.S. strives to bring about peace in the region is on record again saying that his country opposes serious efforts for establishing peace.

Murphy is therefore reflecting true U.S. policies in our region and is proving again that Washington is for aggression and in support of Israel's attacks on the Arab countries. Washington opposes all peace bids whether they are coming from the Soviet Union, the European Community, the Arab World or the United Nations.

The United States stands alone in support of Israel's aggressive and expansionist policies despite criticism from all world nations and from Egypt, Israel's partner in the U.S.-engineered Camp David accords.

Sawt Al Shaab: For implementing 242

RESOLUTIONS PASSED, lately by the U.N. General Assembly represent a new indicator that the international community is more and more becoming aware of the real facts and the true situation in the Middle East region. These resolutions condemn Israel's racial discrimination policies and its aggressive attitudes towards the Arab World.

The world community realised that Israel has been the sources of evil and an enemy of peace and, therefore, it issued these resolutions that serve as positive elements for peace.

Supported by the international community, the Arab countries must indeed take a positive step towards regaining their own rights, and the PLO together with all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict should seize this opportunity of almost overwhelming, international support to start meaningful action for regaining their rights in Palestine. The way to a solution opens with working towards convening an international conference on the Middle East which will put U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 into force and guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Harmful to sustain illusions of U.S. role

By Tareq Masarweh

NOW THAT President Reagan has seen around after his reelection for a new four year-term, some Arabs tend to think there could be hope for a new and more balanced U.S. initiative to settle the Middle East issue. In fact, Arab citizens should not be led to harbour such false hopes as nothing is expected to happen to change the situation unless the Arabs themselves take the initiative and do something meaningful and constructive for regaining their rights.

Any misconception that the Arab-Israeli conflict could be

solved by an external force should indeed be naive and misleading. The Arabs should realise that they must themselves hold the decision to opt for war or peace and they should have a unified stand with regard to any alternative, and above all, they should not allow the superpowers to play a role independent from Arab influence.

The situation, as it is now, presents the Arabs as desperate and weak people, seeking solution from any source and this attitude tends to give Washington a bigger size and a

greater chance to play a part that serves its own strategic policies in our region. The Arabs have been under the false impression that Israel is but an American police station in the region, but events have proved again and again that it is this policeman that shakes the whole American body and not vice versa. The best proof can be found in Washington's announcement of its strategic alliance agreement with Israel in which it pledges total commitment to the Zionist State's expansionist aims.

The Arabs have also to take

into account that current U.S.-Soviet tense relations do not allow for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East in the near future. How can we possibly imagine that the two superpowers will come to agreement on the most troubled spot in the world when they are at each other's throats in Europe and Central America? In fact the absence of a balance of power between Washington and Moscow in this region has been behind America's persistence in denying the Soviet Union an opportunity to play a

role in settling the Arab-Israeli issue.

It is also to be said that the lack of a superpower balance in the Middle East is due mainly to the Arabs themselves. After the 1973 October War the leaders of some Arab countries falsely assumed that they would win Washington's support and lasting friendship if they disposed of Soviet influence. This led to the departure of the Russians from Egypt, Sudan and Somalia and certain Arab capitals received President Nixon as a cha-

mpion of friendship and peace...

The reelection of President Reagan does not warrant new hopes or promise of more initiatives to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is inadvisable to start administering doses of new hope to the Arab masses unless these doses are intended to help pass the time and delay taking any meaningful action, thus prolonging the current weak and unstable situation before an eventual declaration of total bankruptcy and complete failure is articulated.

Israel tightens the anti-inflation screw

The three-month package deal controlling prices and wages in Israel was implemented last month in a desperate attempt to try and bring inflation, running at 1,300 per cent, under control. David Lennor reports on reactions to the crisis package.

TEL AVIV — More than 2,000 shopkeepers have been fined up to the equivalent of \$907 for overcharging for goods since the three-month package deal controlling prices, wages and taxes was implemented more than three weeks ago as part of the effort to control Israel's runaway inflation. During the first few weeks of the freeze it was clear that many people had little idea of what was the value of an item denominated in shekels. Shoppers often asked "What is that in dollars?" when quoted a shekel figure.

Nevertheless, and despite forecasts by economists of a price explosion next February, most Israelis are relieved that an effort is being made to curb the inflationary spiral, which had reached 1,300 per cent before the freeze.

Price control officers have made 22,000 visits to shops to check that prices are displayed on all goods in shekels and that they do not exceed the maximum fixed price. So far, more than Sh. 40 million (\$ 69,000) has been levied in fines by rapid trial courts.

The penalties are one of the key

tools being used by the government to ensure that the price freeze is honoured and that the shekel is returned to the price tags in place of the dollar, which had become increasingly used as a unit of value as inflation rose.

The fact that manufacturers and other businessmen voluntarily agreed to government policing of prices which formerly were set by market forces was a recognition that some drastic action was needed to halt inflation before it destroyed the economy.

"We had to agree to the package deal because we had lost control of our businesses. With inflation at over 1,000 per cent we had no idea whether we were making a profit or a loss," said one of the employers' representatives.

Mr. Gad Proper, joint managing director of the Osem Foods conglomerate, told an Israeli newspaper recently: "To manage an industry when the entire economic system is collapsing is like managing a casino."

"You take an inflation coefficient into consideration, in order not to erode the capital base, and by the next day the cal-

culation errs on the low side. It's an insane system which does not allow a manager of a plant to manage."

The implementation of the price freeze has not been without its problems. There was confusion over the maximum prices, which the Ministry of Industry and Trade revised upwards within two days of their original announcement. The list also caused confusion in shops because the government set some prices at considerably higher levels than they had been before the freeze.

In justification of this, Mr. Yehoshua Forer, director general of the ministry, said: "There was no error. Our objective when we prepared the price list was not to restrain prices, but also to ensure that everyday items would not disappear from the shelves. By giving the merchants some leeway, we could attain that objective."

Under the emergency regulations, the government has frozen the exchange rate between the shekel and the dollar for all domestic transactions at the rate prevailing on Nov. 2, which was Sh. 527 to the dollar.

But the shekel has continued to depreciate, albeit at a much slower pace than in previous months. Professor Assaf Razin of Tel Aviv University puts the rate at 0.5 per

cent a day or less, compared to 0.8 per cent and more before the freeze.

Importers and manufacturers are worried about having to purchase dollars to pay for imports at the prevailing floating rate (currently Sh. 590 and rising), while being forced to sell at the rate fixed on Nov. 2 (Sh. 527).

Not being allowed to pass on these higher costs by increasing their prices led some rate importers to threaten to halt all imports for the duration of the package deal. The Industry and Trade Ministry warned that the importers may have their licences revoked if they refuse to import goods.

The situation was somewhat eased for importers by the government's decision to freeze the exchange rate, for the purposes of levying customs and purchase taxes, at Sh. 527. This will reduce possible losses by importers forced to sell their goods at frozen prices.

Importers have been able to operate so far because the slowdown in the rate of depreciation has meant that the gap between the prevailing exchange rate and the frozen rate is not too great. But many wonder what will happen in another month or two, when that gap will have widened considerably.

Among the first to protest were the importers of about 150 medicines and drugs for which there is no local substitute. The Ministry of Health refused to exclude medicines from the price freeze, but said that if the availability of drugs appeared to be endangered it would refer the matter to the special committee dealing with requests for exemptions.

Others have questioned how it would be possible to fix the prices for shoemakers, dentists or accountants, not to mention plumbers and others involved in repair services.

These prices were supposed to be subjected to a special income tax levy, but professionals and tradesmen protested that this was totally unfair, given that the price of services has to remain fixed while expenses rise.

Despite objections from landlords, the tripartite follow-up committee representing the government, the unions and the employers ruled that in the case of rentals the exchange rate for dollar contracts drawn up before the freeze must be paid at the Nov. 2 rate for the duration of the package deal.

Interestingly, the committee also ruled that, while the exchange rate for compulsory vehicle insurance is frozen, other forms of

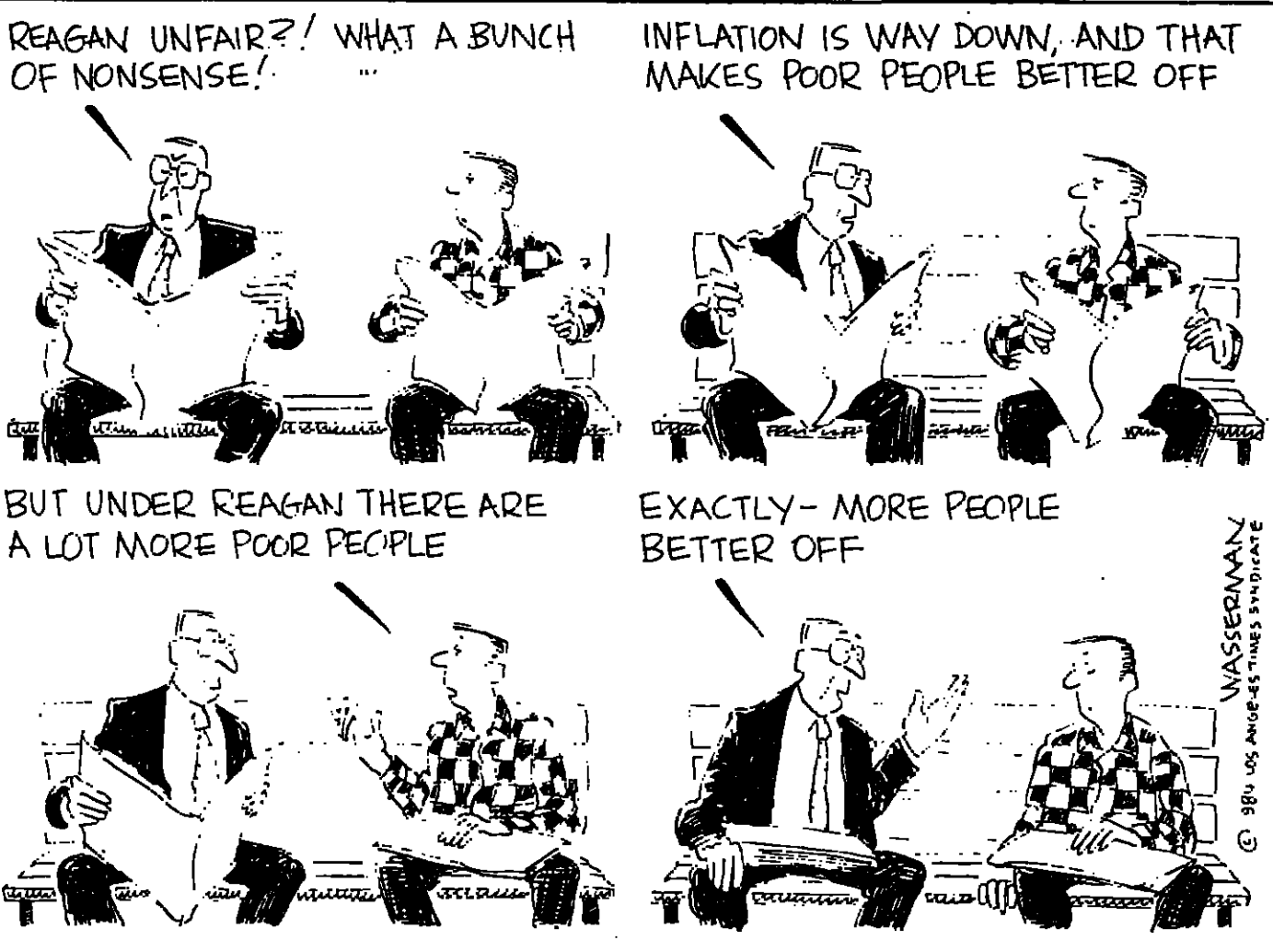
insurance are not affected.

Prof. Razin is one of those worried about the consequences of the package deal. "The banks are receiving subsidies in return for reducing the cost of credit. Exporters are being given funds so that they can continue to operate in these difficult conditions, and a lot of money is being accumulated in the hands of the public, and this is not a process which can contribute to blocking inflation," he said.

He also warned about the dangers of the slowdown in the devaluations. "If inflation in December is 20 per cent and the devaluation is only 13 per cent it will create a dangerous lag which, if it accumulates for a number of months, will severely hit our exports and will greatly encourage imports."

Furthermore, the government had held off imposing new taxes and levies, there had been a reduction in some taxes, customs duties were lower and the travel tax was down.

The package deal is like a tranquilliser, according to Prof. Razin. It did not cure the disease but created a deceptive atmosphere. Unless the government tackled its budget, he said, he remained pessimistic about the prospects for economic recovery — Financial Times news feature.



Heir apparent odd-man-out in politburo

By Martin Nesirky
Reuter

MOSCOW — Mikhail Gorbachev, about to step into the international limelight by visiting Britain, is the youngest member of the soviet politburo and the country's second most powerful man, widely regarded as the likely successor to President Konstantin Chernenko.

Still only 53 in a leadership of septuagenarians, Mr. Gorbachev is described by Western diplomats who have met him as a highly intelligent, outgoing man with an open mind who displays charm, humour and ease of manner.

Mr. Gorbachev came to Moscow from the provinces in 1978, and later became right-hand man to the late Soviet leader Yuri Andropov. He was widely seen as Mr. Andropov's choice of heir.

But when Mr. Andropov died last February, the leadership went to the 72-year-old Chernenko and Mr. Gorbachev was left to consolidate his position as number two.

Since Mr. Andropov's death, Mr. Gorbachev has demonstrated his political stature, taking Mr. Chernenko's arm at the end of a

Kremlin rally and standing close to him in official line-ups.

He is believed to retain his earlier responsibility for agriculture while overseeing broader economic policy, party personnel matters, aspects of ideology and foreign policy.

Under Mr. Andropov, Mr. Gorbachev — the only university graduate in the politburo — was given the daunting task of shaking up the whole economy and bringing new blood into the party, according to Soviet sources.

He has a strong desire to reform the country's sluggish economy and replace older officials with younger people. Some analysts believe that if he gained power he would seek calmer East-West ties so he could concentrate on internal affairs.

Mr. Gorbachev was elevated to full membership of the ruling politburo in 1980 under Leonid Brezhnev, who put him in charge of an ambitious agricultural reform programme. He was not even 50 and had been in Moscow just two years.

Rapid promotions have typified Mr. Gorbachev's career since he graduated from Moscow Uni-

versity as a lawyer in 1955 and swiftly worked his way up the regional Communist Party ladder.

A stout, balding figure with a prominent birth mark on his forehead, Mr. Gorbachev is a Russian who was born in the north Caucasus village of Privolnoye, near Stavropol in March 1931.

Mr. Gorbachev started his working life in Stavropol, an important grain-growing region. He was the city's party chief at the age of 35 and head of the entire regional party organisation four years later.

He was summoned to Moscow in 1978 to become a party Central Committee secretary for agriculture and a year later was a candidate member of the politburo.

Continuing harvest failures overshadowed his first two years as a full member, but during that time he was working on a masterplan to bring about lasting improvements in farming.

The plan, the food programme launched in May 1982, was to loosen bureaucratic control of farms and gave managers more power to decide without consulting ministries.

Once Mr. Andropov took over,

Mr. Gorbachev was able to implement his second project. Its aim was to make wages more directly dependent on results, and to encourage this, workers were put on a so-called team contract under which they effectively subcontracted work from managers and split the profits.

The contract scheme applied in certain areas only, but most of those regions soon raised productivity rates.

Under Mr. Andropov, Mr. Gorbachev was in overall charge of economic policy and involved in party affairs and played a major role in organising elections of officials.

He visited Canada in May 1983 to gain foreign affairs experience, and during Mr. Andropov's illness, it was Mr. Gorbachev who shuttled between the ailing leader and the politburo.

When Mr. Andropov died, older sections of the party, alarmed and angered by Mr. Gorbachev's reforms, backed Mr. Chernenko for the top job instead. However, younger "technocrats" supported Mr. Gorbachev and ensured he retained the number two slot.

Hong Kong accord seen as final stage in dismantling empire

By Ronald Thomson
Reuter

LONDON — The sun that never set on the old British empire will lose another golden ray this week when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher consigns the future of Hong Kong to China.

Her agreement to hand over control of the capitalist enclave in 1997 heralds what could be virtually the final stage in Britain's long and agonising process of shedding imperial power.

When these 13 years have passed, will Britain be left with any jewels in the crown? Even the Rock of Gibraltar or the remote Falkland Islands, current areas of hot dispute?

The questions arouse widely different reactions in this country. Some people have always seen the gradual loss of empire as a decay that made Britain toothless in world affairs. Others call it a triumphant act of selflessness and moral integrity.

Whatever their views, few consider the agreement over Hong Kong as other than a watershed in the ultimate dismantling of Britain's vastly diminished colonial presence.

Mrs. Thatcher is due in Peking on Dec. 19 to sign the agreement in which China undertakes to maintain Hong Kong's capitalist way of life for 50 years after the handover.

For the first time Britain will be giving one of its colonies back to a "foreign" power instead of granting independence to the inhabitants.

The move was dictated by the special circumstances of Hong Kong, first occupied by the British in 1841 and built into a free-wheeling financial centre that has lived in the shadow of a Chinese lease expiring three years before the century ends.

Its agreed departure from the rule of Britain's parliament carried immense symbolism in numbers alone.

Some 5.5 million people in what the British call "dependent territories" now owe allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II, and all but 150,000 of them live in Hong Kong's frenetic society.

The rest are spread over just 12 administrative areas, covering islands, enclaves, rocks and uninhabited atolls in the heart of nowhere.

It is a far cry from the time, less than a century ago, when the map of the world looked like a crimson

cascade of British imperial ascendancy over 38.8 million sq. kilometres.

About 40 territories and 900 million people in Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean have gained independence from Britain since World War II.

Guerrilla wars were fought in Kenya, Cyprus and Aden before independence, though many transfers were accomplished peacefully.

But it took 15 years of dispute and bloodshed to convert the rebellious white-ruled colony of Rhodesia into the black African republic of Zimbabwe in 1980.

One year later London's last colony in Central America, Belize, won its independence. Nearly 2,000 British troops still remain there, however, as a safeguard against possible invasion by neighbouring Guatemala.

And now, in the wake of the Hong Kong deal, Spain's claims to Gibraltar and Argentina's demand for sovereignty over the Falklands have come to the forefront.

Britain said last month it was ready to confer with Madrid about sovereignty over the Rock fortress at the mouth of the Mediterranean — a long-festering sore in relations between the two countries.

Argentina saw that move as a green light for negotiations over the South Atlantic islands it vainly attempted to seize in the 1982 Falklands war with Britain.

But London, insisting the two issues were separate, said it had to abide by the wishes of the inhabitants in each case.

Most of the 30,000 Gibraltarians want to stay British, according to opinion polls. And the 1,800 Falkland islanders are regarded here as solidly in favour of continued rule by a government pouring money into their defences against any new attack.

Britain's writ still runs in remote places like St. Helena in the South Atlantic, where the exiled Napoleon died in 1821, and the Southern Pacific island of Pitcairn, where the mutineers from the bounty made a home in 1790.

Bermuda in the Atlantic is Britain's oldest colony, dating back to 1609. Dependencies in the Caribbean include Montserrat and picturesquely-named Turks and Caicos.

Few of these scattered outposts seem to be looking for a break from London, where the stated policy is "to give independence to those dependencies which want it and not to force it on those which do not."

S. Arabia wins Asian Cup

SINGAPORE (R) — Saudi Arabia lifted the Asian Cup for the first time when they beat China 2-0 in the final of the ten-nation soccer championship here Sunday night.

Saudi Arabia stunned the 40,000 crowd with a 10th minute goal by striker Shaye Al-Nafisah to lead 1-0 at half-time.

The 22-year-old Shaye collected a cross from the right by striker Mehaisen Al-Dossari to send a thundering 15-metre drive into the left-hand corner of the net.

China, demoralised by the early setback, struggled to find their best form in the slippery conditions and rarely tested Saudi goalkeeper Abdullah Al-Diayee.

Striker Majed Mohammad, 26, nicknamed the "Pele of the Desert", grabbed a splendid solo goal to seal Saudi Arabia's triumph two minutes after the interval.

Majed took a pass from defender Mohammad Abdul Jawad and beat three Chinese defenders before rounding goalkeeper Lu Jian Ren and tapping the ball into

the empty net.

Earlier, defending champions Kuwait took third place when they beat Iran 5-3 in a penalty shoot-out. The match was level at 1-1 after normal and extra time.

In Saudi Arabia, conservative Saudis erupted in jubilation after the national soccer side captured the Asian Cup for the first time in their soccer history.

Saudi in their traditional white thobes (robes) and cotton head-dresses took to the streets in their cars, hooting their horns, waving the green national flag and hoisting pictures of the soccer team.

Police tried to maintain order while staying in tune with the friendly mood in the biggest outburst of soccer fever ever seen in the Arabian peninsula kingdom.

The celebrations surpassed those earlier this year when the Saudis qualified for the Los Ang-

les Olympics, where they failed to reach the final rounds but impressed many soccer fans worldwide with their attractive attacking play.

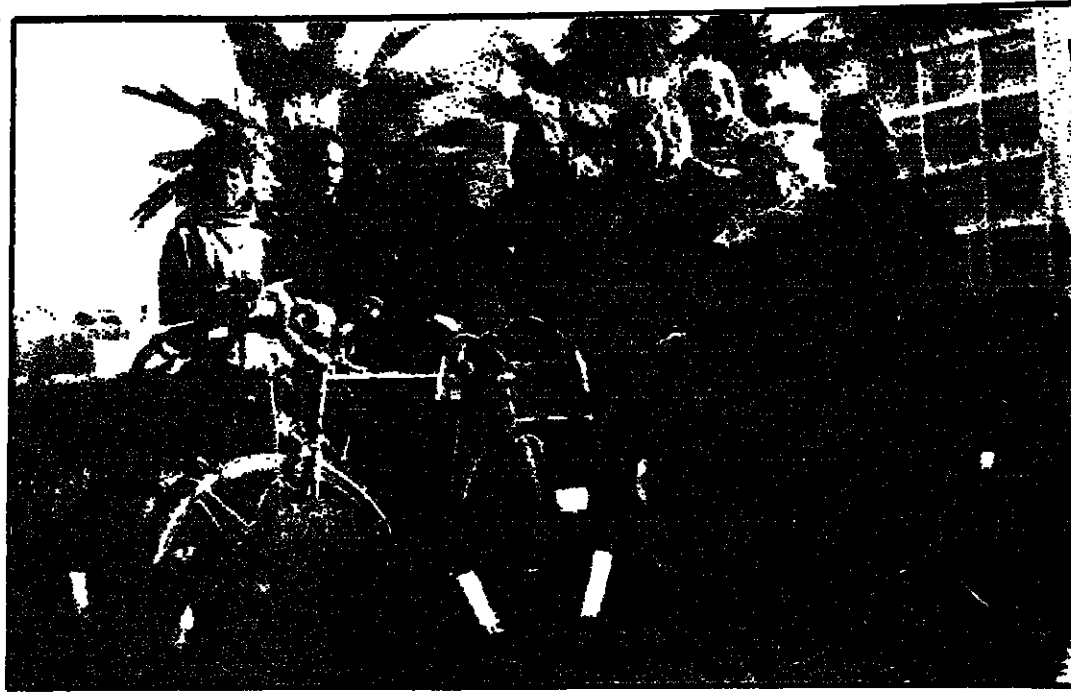
Fans pointed out Sunday night that the victory came a day after a rare heavy rain drenched Riyadh's streets, always seen as a good omen in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi fans watched most of the match 'live' on television but the rain did not bring them luck when the satellite link with Singapore broke down five minutes before the final whistle.

They could still hear their jubilant Saudi commentator, however, who described the result as "a gift from God... a fantastic heroic and historic achievement."

The Saudi players are sure of a tumultuous welcome when they return to Riyadh Monday.

The kingdom's rulers have spent millions of dollars on developing soccer in the early 1970s. They like to point out that modernistic football stadiums have sprouted up where 10 years ago, there soccer was in its beginning.



Nine British cyclists on their way to India on a charity ride take a breather in Amman.

Wilander puts Sweden ahead in Davis Cup tennis final

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (R) — Sweden's Mats Wilander showed his mastery of clay court tennis here Sunday when he beat American Jimmy Connors 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 in a stormy opening to the Davis Cup final.

Wilander dominated the first two sets and, although he faltered at times in the third, the result was rarely in doubt.

Connors was involved in several exchanges with the umpire over disputed line calls. After two verbal obscenities he was docked a game at a crucial moment, giving Wilander a 5-3 lead in the third set.

Wilander, playing before a packed home crowd, took full adv-

antage against the distressed Connors and served out for the match to give Sweden a 1-0 lead over the United States.

In the first set Wilander dropped his opening service game, but swiftly found his form, rattling off six games in succession to take the set in 42 minutes.

Connors was warned for abuse of equipment after smashing his racket into the umpire's chair during the change-over at 4-1.

Wilander quickly took command again in the second set. Serving well, he consistently got the better of the long baseline exchanges and showed a surer touch on his drop shots. The set eventually fell to the Swede 6-3 in 38 minutes.

Although the match produced

some breathtaking tennis from both players, Connors never really looked at home on the specially built indoor surface.

After dropping his opening service game to love, Wilander broke back immediately and then ran up a 3-1 lead.

But Connors, despite being penalised a point for an "audible obscenity," fought back to 3-3 as, for the only time in the match, Wilander lost some of his fluency.

Wilander hung on to hold his service and was then handed the next game, as Connors was penalised for his second obscenity.

It could not have come at a worse time. Connors left the court a desperately unhappy man as the Swedes celebrated the start they wanted.

British cyclists make stop-over in Amman

By Sa'ad G. Hatfar
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Nine daring English cyclists reached Amman Friday on a stop-over after covering 6,000 kilometres through Europe, Turkey and Syria. The cyclists who set off from London on Aug. 16, 1984 on a 9,000-mile journey to India with the aim of reaching their destination within ten months to raise £30,000 for Oxfam: a charity organisation based in England with aims to help Third World countries, the cyclists told the Jordan Times Sunday.

Twenty nine-year-old Chris Mills, Jan Thompson 31, Christine Brown 31, Amanda Hart 20, Bruce Wilson 36, Richard Granger 19, David Hall 27, Nigel Maddocks 21 and Christopher Redish 24 said that upon leaving Jordan they will have to choose between cycling through Saudi Arabia, "which is impossible" because Saudi embassy would not issue transit visas for women in the team; or cycling to Aqaba, from which they will take a boat to Egypt, "which is too expensive" (JD 35 each). In the meantime they are waiting for a solution namely a reduction of the price of Red Sea crossing.

The team comprised of 14 cyclists when they set off. They bearily knew each other. One of them had an accident in Dover before leaving England in which his collar bone was broken and he had to stay there, two went back when reaching Austria, a woman got married in Turkey and another one will join them in Karachi, they said.

Speaking about the journey, they said they had passed through France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary where they separated into three groups: the first went through Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and to Istanbul in Turkey, the second group crossed Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. The third group headed towards Italy, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey all ending their European trek in Istanbul.

They encountered rough weather, sliding roads and most of the time they were catching colds and flu because of the unstable weather condition.

In Syria, they said, they had to go back to the Syrian embassy in

Turkey in order to renew their visas for another six months. They said that when they applied for the visas in England they asked for a six month transit visas, but when arriving there they found out that their visas were valid only for three months, they were delayed 6 days travelling back to Turkey by bus.

However, they said, things have changed entirely since their arrival in Jordan. They spent a night in Jerash at a Jordanian family's home who took them in to shelter from the rainy weather Thursday night.

Their scheduled journey was due to pass through Egypt, Sudan, Kenya and from there on board a ship to Karachi then India, but they had to change the plans because they thought it is dangerous to cycle through the jungles in Sudan and the expected lack of money if they crossed Africa.

Speaking about the financial support for the adventure, they said that they were supporting themselves and the expected cost of the journey was £15,000 each.

There last stop will be in (Pachod) a hundred miles east of Bombay where the money raised by sponsorship in England will be donated for Oxfam's rural health project in Pachod which is already built, and for training Indian women to work as midwives and nurses in the villages surrounding Pachod, they added.

The money for the project will be raised by means of donating £2 a day by their friends back at home, and by the time they reach their destiny, it is hoped that they would have raised £30,000.

Krizaj wins world slalom

MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO, Italy (R) — Yugoslavia's Bojan Krizaj claimed a World Cup slalom win Sunday in a tough race which saw the resurgence of Sweden's Ingemar Stenmark.

But there was disappointment for Pirmin Zurbriggen of Switzerland and Marc Girardelli of Austria, leaders in the chase for overall supremacy. Both dropped out after missing gates.

Visiting Cypriot team, Jordan's Jazeera draw

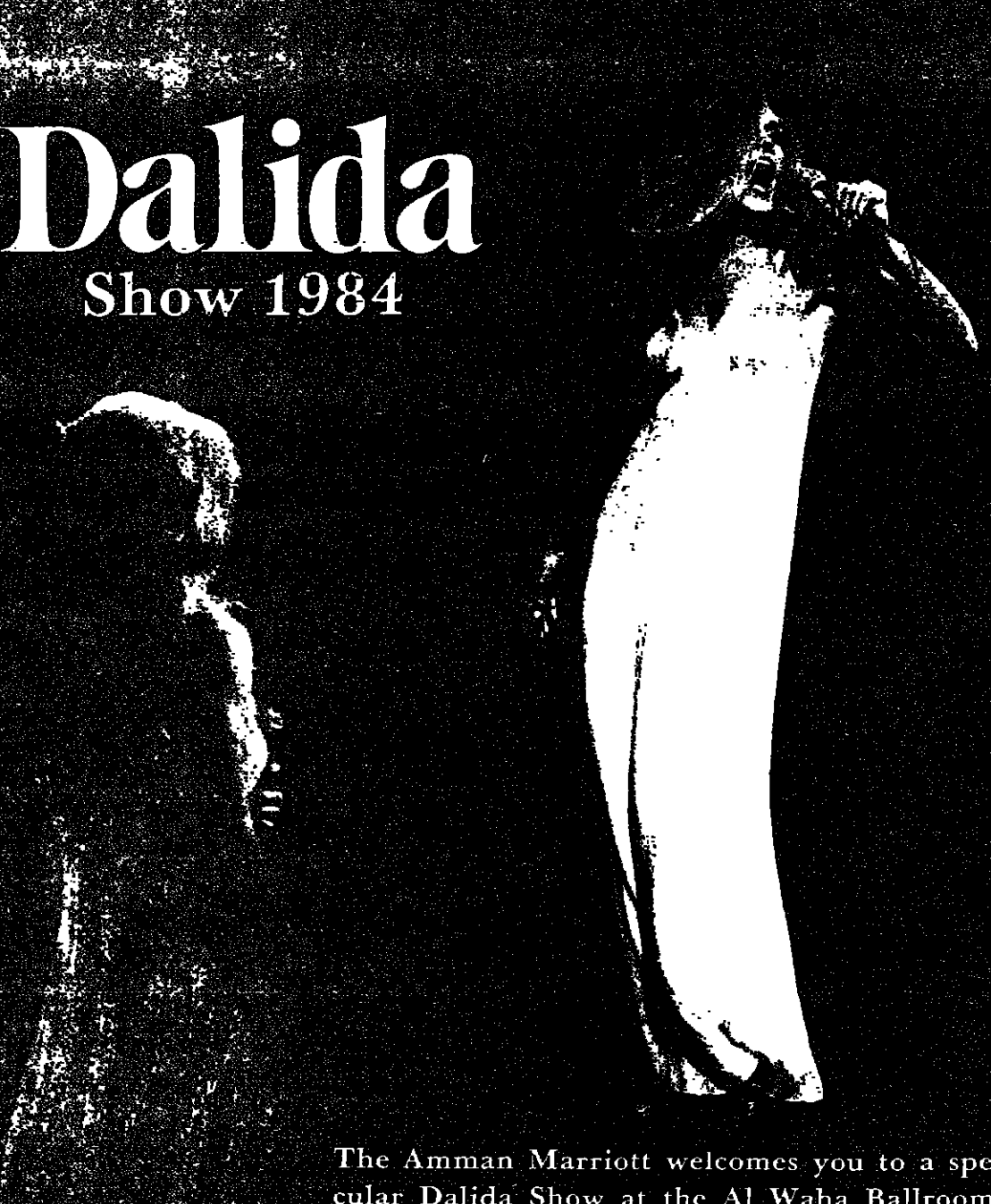
AMMAN (J.T.) — The visiting Cypriot football team, Avagoros drew 0-0 with Jordan's Al Jazeera football club at Al Hussein Youth City stadium Sunday afternoon.

The guests, who are here at the invitation of a local tourist agency, gave a mediocre performance against a determined Jazeera who had most of the attacks throughout the match.

Avagoros had one shot at goal which hit the woodwork in the first half and on very few occasions did they threaten the Jazeera goal. Jazeera were the better team on the day making swift attacks but luck wouldn't come their way. On three occasions the Jordanians came close to scoring but were denied by the magnificent efforts of the Cypriot goalkeeper.

Minister meets Iraqi ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Youth Dr. Hani Khasawneh discussed with the Iraqi ambassador in Amman Ibrahim Shuja' Sultan Sunday bilateral, youth and sport cooperation between the two countries. Dr. Khasawneh also received Sunday the Czechoslovakian Charge d'Affaires in Amman Emil Hrusicky and discussed with him cooperation in sport and youth between Jordan and Czechoslovakia.




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WHO OF US IS THE THIEF

(Colour)
(Arabic)
Performances: 12-3 - 5:30-8

Cinema RAINBOW

Tel: 25155

AGAINST ALL ODDS

(Colour)
3:30 6:00 8:30 10:30 p.m.

Cinema ZAHARAN

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WHITE COLOUR

(In colour)
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Cinema OPERA

JAWS-3

(Colour)

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KING OF THE RING

(In colour)

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Ministers to discuss future of EC steel industry today

BRUSSELS (R) — European Community (EC) industry ministers meet Monday to discuss whether loss-making steel firms should get operating subsidies after Dec. 31.

West Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark oppose demands by other Community states to extend by 12 months the end-1984 deadline for finishing this assistance, diplomats said.

Italy, France, Belgium and Luxembourg are seeking not only to extend the time limit but also to increase the actual subsidy amounts which their steelmakers can receive from public funds.

The Community's commission is backing an extension of operating subsidies in order to smooth the way for companies to

complete major restructuring programmes aimed at eliminating overcapacity and achieving viability by the end of next year.

The only subsidies currently authorised for the group's steel industry next year are investment aids rather than money to overcome firms' cash flow problems.

West Germany fears any extension of operating subsidies could endanger the subsequent deadline of end-1985 for winding up all assistance, including that for new plant investment.

It believes firms benefitting from an extension of operating subsidies should be required to make additional cuts in their steel-making capacity.

This idea has been opposed by

competition commissioner Mr. Frans Andriessen, who has said reductions in tonnage capacity are aimed at restoring viability, and extra cuts should not be demanded merely because a firm's subsidies are extended.

Diplomats said Monday's talks might not reach agreement on the subsidy extension plan. Such an accord would have to be unanimous and hard bargaining by the West Germans could force the issue to be debated again in the new year after the deadline expires, they said.

The Community's emergency plan for steel, due to be wound up at the end of next year, includes compulsory production quotas and a system of minimum prices.

Saudi imports decline

BAHRAIN (R) — Saudi Arabia's imports dropped 11.2 per cent in the first half of this year compared with the same 1983 period, to 63.28 billion riyals (\$17.78 billion), according to official figures released Saturday.

The official Saudi Press Agency, quoting an official report, said the decline was partly due to lower prices for some imports, but also because of higher domestic production of other products.

Japan was Saudi Arabia's biggest supplier, accounting for 12.29 billion riyals (\$3.45 billion) of the total, followed by the United States at 10.61 billion (\$2.98 billion).

Imports from West Germany totalled 5.61 billion riyals (\$1.6 billion), from France 5.01 billion (\$1.41 billion) and from Britain 3.61 billion riyals (\$1.01 billion). The report said imports of trucks and other vehicles fell by 18.5 per cent and those of furniture and clothing by 7.9 per cent, while imports of foodstuffs rose by 22.7 per cent.

Firm signs \$600m accord

The Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) Sunday signed a \$600 million agreement with Arab, Italian and Finnish companies for the construction of a Saudi-European petrochemical plant in Jubail on Saudi Arabia's eastern coast.

The agreement was signed by Saudi minister of industry and electricity power Sheikh Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al Zamel, who is also chairman of SABIC, and representatives from the other three partners, the Arab Petroleum Investment Corporation (Apicorp), Enichem of Italy and Neste Oy of Finland.

Under the agreement, SABIC will own 70 per cent of the shares of the European-Saudi company while the other three partners will get 10 per cent each.

Sheikh Zamel told reporters that the company's capital will be 30 per cent of the project's total cost.

He said the project would take three years but did not mention when it was due to start.

The plant is expected to produce 50,000 tonnes annually of Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE), 125,000 tonnes of butadiene, and 80,000 tonnes of butane-one using locally-produced feedstock.

IDB gives Oman \$14m, Algeria \$35m

JEDDAH (R) — The Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) said Sunday it will provide Oman with \$14 million to finance a gas project and Algeria with \$35 million for the purchase of industrial goods.

GATT blames slow world recovery on rising unpredictability, protectionism

GENEVA (R) — Growing unpredictability of trade policy amid rising protectionism is at the root of the world economy's weak response to the boom in the United States, the 90-nation trade body GATT said Monday.

GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) warned in its annual report on international trade that increasing uncertainty could stifle investment and economic activity.

"Where trade policy discipline deteriorates to a point at which protection becomes easily available to almost any industry anywhere, it would be clearly imprudent to invest," it said.

In past recoveries, an initial rise in U.S. imports has sparked activity from country to country, fueling the growth of world trade and investment in a mutually reinforcing process.

"Little of this is observable to date," the 220-page report said. The commonly cited problem of high interest rates was only a

minor part of the picture. "A determined effort of the major countries to roll back protectionist forces could support and prolong the recovery," it said.

"Long-term business confidence has still to be restored." In Western Europe and North America, market access had been tightened further throughout 1983 in sectors such as steel, agriculture, consumer electronics, automobiles and textiles.

Trans-Atlantic frictions had intensified while pending anti-dumping cases had added significantly to uncertainty, GATT said.

"Sooner or later, the results depress overall economic performance and circumscribe the potential growth of trade," it

added. With little to buttress investors' confidence, the effects were particularly felt in heavily-indebted developing countries.

"At the prevailing level of real rates of interest, their difficulties increase unless they can achieve a higher degree of economic efficiency," GATT said.

But with insecure access to export markets, the incentive to invest more strongly in possible exports was weak, it added.

Latin American debtors responded by curtailing imports rather than by expanding exports, bringing last year's total down by a quarter from the 1981 peak to \$150 billion.

Although data for 1984 was scarce, most striking was that this process appeared to be coming to an end, it added.

"Countries such as Brazil, Mexico, South Korea or Turkey are currently experiencing a rapid growth of their export earnings, brightening investment prospects." The report gave no figures.

Against the overall backdrop of eroding trade discipline and proliferating conflicts, strict application of non-discriminatory policies was the only way to strengthen the multilateral trading system, it added.

"Protection could never have risen to its present levels if it had not been possible for governments to implement protective measures in a discriminatory way," GATT continued.

On calls by several countries, led by the U.S., for new trade negotiations following the 1973/79 Tokyo round, the report suggested that "one general negotiation" might suffice.

"It might be possible to trade off national concessions on particular issues and thus to arrive at a 'balanced package,' which, while not containing ideal solutions, would still be an improvement on the status quo." It did not elaborate.

The report noted that the recovery in the U.S. and other industrialised nations was marked by a shift towards service industries, such as banking, insurance and telecommunications.

"In the United States the net gain of jobs (in 1983) is entirely due to employment expansion in services," it said.

Last month GATT's contracting parties yielded to U.S. pressure to bring the \$500 billion annual trade in services into the agreement's framework.

Officials fear new debt problems if world economic growth founders

WASHINGTON (R) — Foreign debt problems that once threatened the world's financial stability have eased but there could be a fresh crisis if world economic expansion founders, Reagan administration officials said Saturday.

With this month's agreement between Argentina and foreign creditor banks, the last of the big Latin American debtor nations has grudgingly accepted the tough conditions imposed on it by Western creditors.

Several officials here expressed optimism that the worst of the crisis had passed.

They agree that much of the progress could be undone if the European and Japanese economies fail to pick up steam.

Economic expansion in these countries is needed to compensate for a slowdown in the United States and help sustain demand for exports from debtor countries.

Some administration officials said they doubted whether Europe and Japan could pick up the slack.

They said the United States absorbed 85 per cent of the increase in Latin American exports in 1984, enabling those countries to service between \$350 billion and \$400 billion of foreign debt.

A senior treasury official said the U.S. slowdown was temporary

and should cause no severe problems, but it could have serious effects on the debt situation if it turned into a recession.

"The question is whether Europe and Japan will grow and give us room to slow," an administration aide said.

Other officials say the conditions imposed on the debtors by their creditors, acting through the International Monetary Fund, are unlikely to work again in a new crisis.

Officials fear that the debtors would reject more austerity measures.

Mexico is seeking political talks between Latin American debtor countries and leading Western creditor countries.

"At the heart of their concerns are the very substantial social pressures they have to deal with," one official said.

Mexico's brush with bankruptcy in 1982 set off the debt crisis but its economic reforms are the most advanced of any in Latin America.

That makes it more difficult to ignore than if it came from Argentina, whose ability to adopt austerity is still in question.

A senior treasury official told Reuters the department was resisting the proposal for political

talks.

The present U.S. strategy is to encourage debtor countries that have shown economic improvement to reach agreements with creditor banks spreading debt repayments over several years.

Mexico paved the way with an agreement stretching repayment of about \$48 billion over 14 years with interest 1-1/2 per cent above interbank rates.

Venezuela followed and Brazil, whose foreign debt amounts to more than \$100 billion, is engaged in talks with creditor banks on rescheduling almost \$50 billion.

Argentina this month agreed to a \$20 billion refinancing package that will last until the end of 1985.

A senior monetary official said the fact that talks with the large Latin American debtors were in progress or concluded meant "in one sense, we are out of the immediate liquidity crisis."

Another cautioned: "The debt crisis is not behind us, the debtors need to maintain good debt servicing."

A wave of mini-crises seems likely next year as bankers and officials turn their attention to the smaller debtor countries such as Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador.

Mexico continues to curb oil exports

KUWAIT (R) — Mexico's natural resources minister said Saturday his country continued to curb vital crude oil sales in support of an OPEC agreement to prop up world prices through output cuts, despite OPEC acknowledgement that its members have cheated on their own pact.

Mexico, heavily indebted and strapped for foreign revenue, is a leading oil exporter but does not belong to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

But it agreed in October to a request by OPEC to trim oil sales to support an OPEC accord slashing group production by 1.5 million barrels per day (b/d), to 16

million b/d, to try shore up oil prices.

The Mexican minister, Mr. Francisco Labastida, said Saturday Mexico's exports would average 1.44 million b/d through November and December, after averaging 1.54 million b/d in the first 10 months of the year.

Production was running at around 1.7 million b/d, he told reporters here.

Mr. Labastida, approached after he met Kuwaiti Oil Minister Ali Al Khalifa Al Sabah, refused to answer questions beyond detailing Mexico's production and export levels.

In a brief statement, however, he commended Kuwait and Saudi

Arabia, which he visited before coming here Friday night, for their "exemplary" attitude and "the careful way they have been intervening in world oil markets."

Saudi Arabia's oil Minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani said last month that the kingdom, OPEC's leading producer, and Kuwait were producing well below their quotas to help offset overproduction by members who had ignored their new limits.

One week ago he conceded that some OPEC members, whom he did not name, were exceeding the lower quotas agreed in October, and said OPEC output was up to 500,000 b/d above the new limit.

THE BETTER HALF By Harris

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Amold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SHURC

KNEWA

BOPISH

FITONY

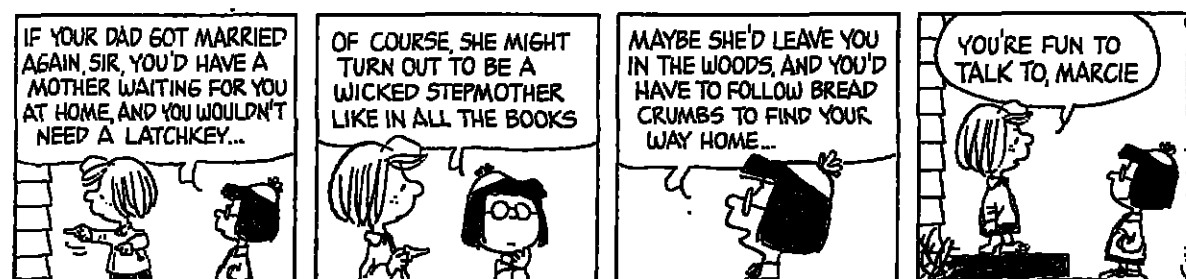
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles FAVOR PLUSH DEFAME BUSILY
Answer: Held up in bad weather — AN UMBRELLA

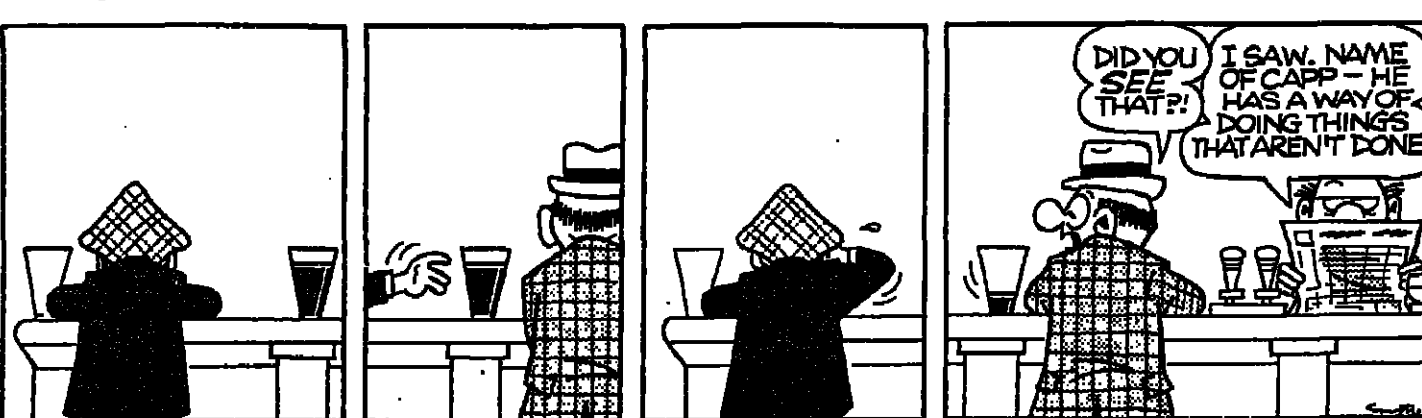
Peanuts



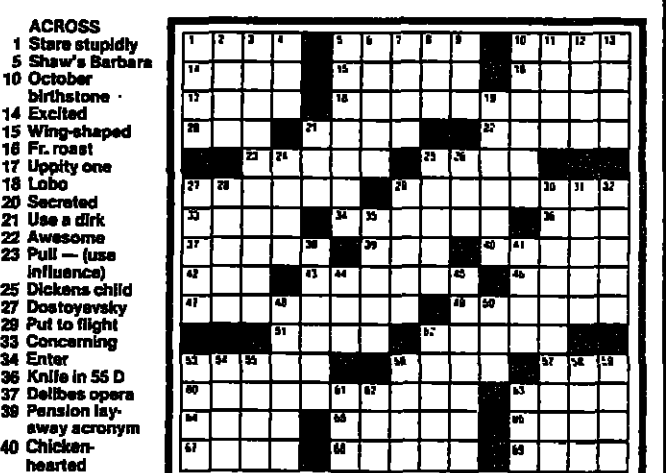
Mutt 'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



THE Daily Crossword by Samuel K. Flegner



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1 Across	2 Across	3 Across	4 Across
5 Across	6 Across	7 Across	8 Across
9 Across	10 Across	11 Across	12 Across
13 Across	14 Across	15 Across	16 Across
17 Across	18 Across	19 Across	20 Across
21 Across	22 Across	23 Across	24 Across
25 Across	26 Across	27 Across	28 Across
29 Across	30 Across	31 Across	32 Across
33 Across	34 Across	35 Across	36 Across
37 Across	38 Across	39 Across	40 Across
41 Across	42 Across	43 Across	44 Across
45 Across	46 Across	47 Across	48 Across
49 Across	50 Across	51 Across	52 Across
53 Across	54 Across	55 Across	56 Across
57 Across	58 Across	59 Across	60 Across
61 Across	62 Across	63 Across	64 Across
65 Across	66 Across	67 Across	68 Across
69 Across	70 Across	71 Across	72 Across
73 Across	74 Across	75 Across	76 Across
77 Across	78 Across	79 Across	80 Across
81 Across	82 Across	83 Across	84 Across
85 Across	86 Across	87 Across	88 Across
89 Across	90 Across	91 Across	92 Across
93 Across	94 Across	95 Across	96 Across
97 Across	98 Across	99 Across	100 Across

One fifth of lethal gas neutralised Fear eases a little in Indian disaster city

BHOPAL, India (R) — The fear that has gripped the central Indian city of Bhopal for two weeks eased a little Sunday as almost a fifth of the gas which killed more than 2,500 people was neutralised.

Srinivasan Varadarajan, director general of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and in charge of the conversion of the methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas, told a press conference three tonnes of the gas were converted into pesticide Sunday.

"There is even less risk now of any unexpected reaction than we had thought yesterday," he said. The conversion was supervised by 200 scientists, technicians and employees of Union Carbide, the U.S. firm whose Indian subsidiary owns the plant from which the killer fumes escaped on Dec. 3.

Outside, firemen continuously sprayed water on sacking hung round the factory fence.

Mr. Varadarajan said another 1.2 tonnes of MIC had been found in six stainless steel drums and this would also have to be neutralised. The operation would resume at 0830 (0300 GMT) Monday and the job should be completed within about four days, he added.

About 45 engineers, scientists and technicians were inside the plant to implement and supervise the neutralisation process. A spokesman said he was in the plant's control room and saw no American scientists but could not say if U.S. employees of Union Carbide

were involved in the operation. The process began at 10.18 a.m., more than one hour late, when Arjun Singh, chief minister of Madhya Pradesh state, of which Bhopal is the capital, was delayed in arriving at the plant.

Armed police and paramilitary troops threw a cordon round the factory as helicopters circled overhead throwing a curtain of water over the plant.

In the morning, police used baton charges to keep back a crowd of about 500, including 60 demonstrators shouting "down with (U.S. President Ronald) Reagan and the CIA", when they moved to within 50 metres of the plant.

The demonstrators told reporters they were protesting against alleged American involvement in the tragedy. But most of the crowd were sightseers, police told Reuters.

By mid-afternoon, the crowd had dispersed and many of the police on duty were sleeping under trees, while children played in water drawn from fire trucks lining the street.

Shops near the factory remained closed and the streets were deserted except for occasional cyclists and other vehicles.

By midday cars, trucks, bicycles and rickshaws were back on city streets deserted since Saturday night.

However shortly before the operation started there were still queues at bus and rail stations as residents joined a panic exodus which has sent one quarter of the city of 70,000 people fleeing over the past few days.

Residents told Reuters they were more relaxed Sunday after the operation began without mishap, but one scooter driver wore a red helmet, dark glasses and a World War II gas mask.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said the state high court in Jabalpur has ordered that 15 kg of MIC be preserved for examination by the government commission of inquiry into the leak. It also ordered the pipe key in the tank which leaked be kept intact after the MIC was used up.

The court would not allow the factory to continue operating after the neutralisation, PTI added.

Mr. Singh, when asked about the future of the Union Carbide plant, said: "It should be permanently removed from here. It should be closed permanently."

Mr. Singh told reporters he and his wife would remain in the factory throughout the operation to neutralise the chemical. Accountant R.C. Matta told Reuters his family was not afraid of a new gas leak — "we have plenty of water. Only people who saw friends die are in panic and fleeing."



GORBACHEV MEETS THATCHER: premier's country residence, Chequers, Sunday
Soviet politburo member Mikhail Gorbachev meets British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at the

India deploys navy to protect fishermen

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian navy has been called out to protect trawlers fishing near the Sri Lanka coast after charges that they were attacked by Colombo's security forces, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said Sunday.

The news agency quoted S. Gurumurthy, district collector of Ramanathapuram on the southern tip of India, as saying one navy boat had already arrived and was patrolling the area.

Mr. Gurumurthy said about six more navy boats were on their way to the narrow Palk Strait which separates the two countries.

In a series of bitter exchanges last week Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi accused Colombo of attacks on Indian trawlers and indiscriminate killings in Sri Lanka by security forces.

India has repeatedly denied Sri Lanka's charges that Tamil separatist guerrillas fighting for an independent nation in northern Sri Lanka are trained in South

India. The latest row was triggered by a guerrilla offensive in which nearly 400 people have been killed in the last month.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa Saturday accused India of interfering in Sri Lanka's internal affairs and preventing a solution to the island's ethnic unrest.

Meanwhile official sources said, Sunday the government has discovered a plot by separatist guerrillas to kidnap Sri Lanka's national Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali.

The kidnap plot was revealed by captured guerrillas during interrogation, the sources said. They gave no further details but the island newspaper said the guerrillas planned to abduct the minister on the eve of last Friday's all-party conference on ethnic unrest.

Mr. Athulathmudali is in charge of security operations to combat

the guerrillas. The government is examining the possibility of hiring retired Gurkha soldiers to guard strategic installations from guerrilla attacks, the sources said.

They said if the Gurkhas were hired they would do only guard duty and would not take part in combat operations.

Gurkhas are Nepalese soldiers renowned for their courage and endurance. Tamil guerrillas have attempted to attack some key installations in the past few months.

Their targets included an oil pipeline in Colombo and a transmitting station of the state television system in the central hills. President Junius Jayewardene said Saturday he was prepared to hold a referendum or a general election to test public opinion on his proposals to ease tension between Tamils and majority Sinhalese.

Gonzalez wins party support for NATO and economic policies

MADRID (R) — Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez has persuaded his ruling Socialist party at its national congress to drop its opposition to Spanish membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Mr. Gonzalez also won comfortable backing from the delegates for his free market economic policies.

A resolution upholding government economic policy was approved early Sunday by 325 votes to 41 at the end of a marathon session.

The four-day congress, which was to end later Sunday, has earlier approved a main resolution which left the government a free hand to keep Spain within NATO by 412 votes with 126 against and 42 abstentions.

On Saturday, the 769 delegates approved a resolution tabled by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) leadership to drop the party's opposition to Spain's membership of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

A majority of Spaniards want to leave NATO, according to opinion polls, and the Socialists remain committed to holding a referendum on membership in 1986. But the congress backed Mr. Gonzalez plan to campaign for a vote against withdrawal.

Delegates defeated three resolutions calling for Spanish neutrality, a campaign for an anti-NATO vote in the referendum and the withdrawal of U.S. forces stationed in Spain.

COLUMN

'Ultrasound test not harmful'

LONDON (R) — A report by Britain's Royal College of Obstetricians has said it had found no evidence that ultrasound scans of pregnant women were harmful. The study by a college working party said it found "no evidence of adverse bio-effects from diagnostic ultrasound..." and did not expect any such effects to appear in future generations. Research in the United States has suggested that the procedure could cause abnormalities and retard growth. An ultrasound machine uses sound waves to produce a picture of an unborn baby on a screen. Doctors can use it to detect possible handicaps and multiple pregnancies.

Panto boom causes dwarf shortages

LONDON (R) — A Christmas boom for Britain's favourite pantomime, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, has caused a sudden demand for short actors to play the fairy tale heroine's little friends. Theatres in Leeds, Newcastle, Belfast, Southend, Aberdeen, Sutton and Wolverhampton are all staging holiday productions of the pantomime. The actors' union equity has waived its usual restrictions to allow non-union members to play the dwarfs.

Writer jailed for helping friend to commit suicide

LONDON (R) — A woman novelist who helped an elderly, blind friend commit suicide by putting a plastic bag over her head has been sentenced to nine months in jail. Children's author Helen Hough had promised to suffocate Annetta Harding, 84, if a drug overdose she took to kill herself failed to work, a London court heard. She sat with Ms. Harding for two hours after she took the overdose and then, believing her still to be alive, put the bag over her head. "I could not break my promise," she told police. Ms. Harding, 60, who began visiting Ms. Harding as a voluntary social worker, pleaded guilty to attempted murder. A charge of murder had been dropped because the cause of death could not be proved.

Singer Nolan taken off life support system

NEWCASTLE, England (R) — Singer Mike Nolan of the Bucks Fizz pop group, who is critically ill after a road accident, was Saturday taken off a life support system, a hospital spokesman said. But the 30-year-old pop star was still in a coma and his progress was being closely monitored by doctors. Earlier, the spokesman said there had been an "encouraging improvement" in Nolan's condition, although he remained critical.

Soviet youth cannot dance, newspaper says

MOSCOW (R) — A Moscow newspaper Saturday hit out at Soviet youths for not being able to dance properly, whether it be ballroom dancing or disco. The trades union newspaper Trud said young Soviets had forgotten old dances such as the waltz or foxtrot and were useless at modern disco dancing. Couples were embarrassed when they had to dance a traditional waltz at weddings, and when the music changed to upbeat modern hits the dancing was scarcely better, it said.

Christmas turkeys found poisoned

GRIMSBY, England (AP) — Another turkey contaminated with mercury by animal rights militants was found Saturday in a store in the east coast town of Grimsby, police said. A similar discovery was made Friday after animal rights protesters telephoned a newspaper saying they were contaminated. Police said health officials had found a mercury-like substance in one turkey — enough to poison anyone who ate it. Last month the Animal Liberation Front caused the temporary withdrawal of thousands of chocolate bars from shop shelves after making a similar claim. The second contaminated bird was found after an anonymous telephoned warning.

U.S. to keep lid on details of renewed arms talks

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States is preparing for its upcoming talks with the Soviet Union in extraordinary secrecy to prevent leaks that would tip the Soviets to weaknesses in U.S. negotiating positions and to prevent damaging rhetoric between the two superpowers, a White House official said Saturday.

The official, speaking only on condition he not be identified by name, said the administration does not expect the talks next month in Geneva between secretary of state George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to produce concrete results.

But he added U.S. officials hope the discussions will mark the beginning of "long, hard bargaining leading to a more stable relations between the two superpowers."

"We believe experience has shown that private and candid discussions with the Soviets produce the best results and as far as we're

concerned we're going to maintain that confidentiality, including at Geneva and afterwards," the official said.

"We don't expect to breach the confidentiality of the discussions if we are hoping to make progress over time," said the official, adding: "It will be hard bargaining and we're in for the long haul."

He said President Reagan was consulting a senior arms control group two to three times a week to prepare for the talks.

He said that during a stay by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at the Camp David presidential retreat next Saturday, Mr. Reagan would be very interested in her views on Soviet thinking and would give her further insight into U.S. preparation for the talks.

Ms. Thatcher embarked this weekend on a round of international contacts involving discussions with key Soviet and Chinese leaders.

New Belizean leader urges more foreign investments

BELIZE CITY (R) — Belizean Prime Minister designate Manuel Esquivel has pledged to open up his sparsely-populated country to foreign investors and called for economic ties with the United States.

"We will pursue a very aggressive policy of seeking foreign investment," Mr. Esquivel told his first press conference since his conservative United Democratic Party (UDP) won a landslide victory in elections here on Friday, the first since Belize became independent from Britain in 1981.

Taking 21 of 28 seats in the Belize legislature, Mr. Esquivel's UDP inflicted a crushing defeat on the People's United Party (PUP) of Prime Minister George Price, who had dominated Belizean political life for more than 30 years.

"This was the end of an era, the beginning of a new era," one Western diplomat remarked in a word-play on the prime minister's name.

Many Belizeans saw the poll as a contest of personalities rather than of issues. Mr. Esquivel made clear he had no intention of introducing profound changes that would alter the status of Belize.

After the former colony of British Honduras became independent on Sept. 21, 1981, Britain left a 1,800-strong military garrison here to deter Guatemala's military rulers from sending troops across the border to enforce the century-old claim.

Relations with Vietnam essential to counter potential threat from China, Indonesia says

By Richard Pascoe
Reuters

JAKARTA — Vietnam and the rest of South-east Asia should forge closer ties to face the potential threat from a stronger China in the next century, according to Indonesian Armed Forces Commander Benny Murdani.

In an exclusive interview with Reuters, his first with foreign journalists since taking office in March 1983, he said China's sheer size would one day make it a force to be reckoned with.

"When that day comes — 50, 60 or 100 years from now — then the countries outside China, especially in South-east Asia, especially in South-east Asia, will have to be united, if not physically then ideologically," Mr. Murdani said.

"Using this as a yardstick, we feel that Vietnam should be convinced to have better relations with this part of the world."

"Some people are talking about

a Vietnamese buffer between South-east Asia and China — I don't want to put it that bluntly, but maybe that's what we're thinking of," he added.

Indonesia is closest to Vietnam among the six-member non-communist Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN). It is the biggest ASEAN member, with 160 million people.

ASEAN, which groups Indonesia with Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Brunei, has repeatedly deplored Vietnam's six-year-old military occupation of Kampuchea and backs Prince Norodom Sihanouk's anti-Vietnamese coalition.

But ASEAN still wants a peaceful solution and last July appointed Jakarta as its official interlocutor with Hanoi.

Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumadarmaja is due to visit Vietnam early next year, although offi-

cially he will discuss only bilateral issues because he does not yet have ASEAN agreement to raise the Kampuchea question, he told Reuters in a separate interview.

"Some partners, I won't mention who, don't feel the time has come for any serious talk with the Vietnamese," Mr. Mochtar said, adding that Indonesia wanted to keep the lines to Hanoi open.

Mr. Murdani himself made a controversial visit to Hanoi last February during which he said Vietnam posed no military threat to the region.

He warned in the interview that China's influence would grow as it became more advanced, when it would be able to harm the economies of Indonesia and other South-east Asian nations by undercutting prices for agricultural goods and oil.

"We pay our farmers. The Chinese don't — they just take it (the produce) and sell it," he said, "so it does not necessarily have to be a

physical threat."

"Once it becomes an advanced country or a partially advanced country, they'll have something more to say than they say today, you see," Mr. Murdani added.

He denied that he wanted Vietnam to join South-east Asia in a formal anti-Peking bloc, but he said the region should be more united than at present "by the time the Chinese are strong enough to call the shots."

Indonesia recently resumed direct trade with China for the first time in nearly 20 years.

President Suharto is however determined to keep diplomatic ties frozen until Peking gives an assurance that its Communist Party will stop giving political support to underground parties in South-east Asia.

The Chinese are unwilling to do this, although they say they have long since ceased giving material support.

Disgraced Soviet aide dies, buried without ceremony

MOSCOW (AP) — Disgraced former Interior Minister Nikolai A. Shchelokov, fired under the Andropov leadership and stripped of his general's rank in an anti-corruption drive, is dead at the age of 73 and has been buried in a modest grave in a Moscow cemetery.

There was no official announcement of Mr. Shchelokov's death, which came just over a month after he was stripped of his rank in what may have been a signal that he was to be tried on criminal charges. The cause of death was not known.

West German radio correspondent Johannes Grotzky, who witnessed the funeral Saturday after being tipped by a source, said no recognisable Soviet officials attended. A temporary grave marker read: Nikolai Andropovich Shchelokov, 1910 to Dec. 13, 1984.

Mr. Shchelokov was one of the closest confidants of the late President Leonid I. Brezhnev and headed the Interior Ministry for 16 years — a post that gave him control of the Soviet Union's uniformed police force.

Under his helm the militia became known for corruption, and Mr. Shchelokov was rumoured to have been involved in embezzlement and misappropriation of property.

Yuri V. Andropov, who succeeded Mr. Brezhnev in November 1982, fired Mr. Shchelokov as one of his first major public acts. In June, 1983, Mr. Shchelokov was expelled from the Communist Party Central Committee for "mistakes," and he lost his army general's rank about a month ago.